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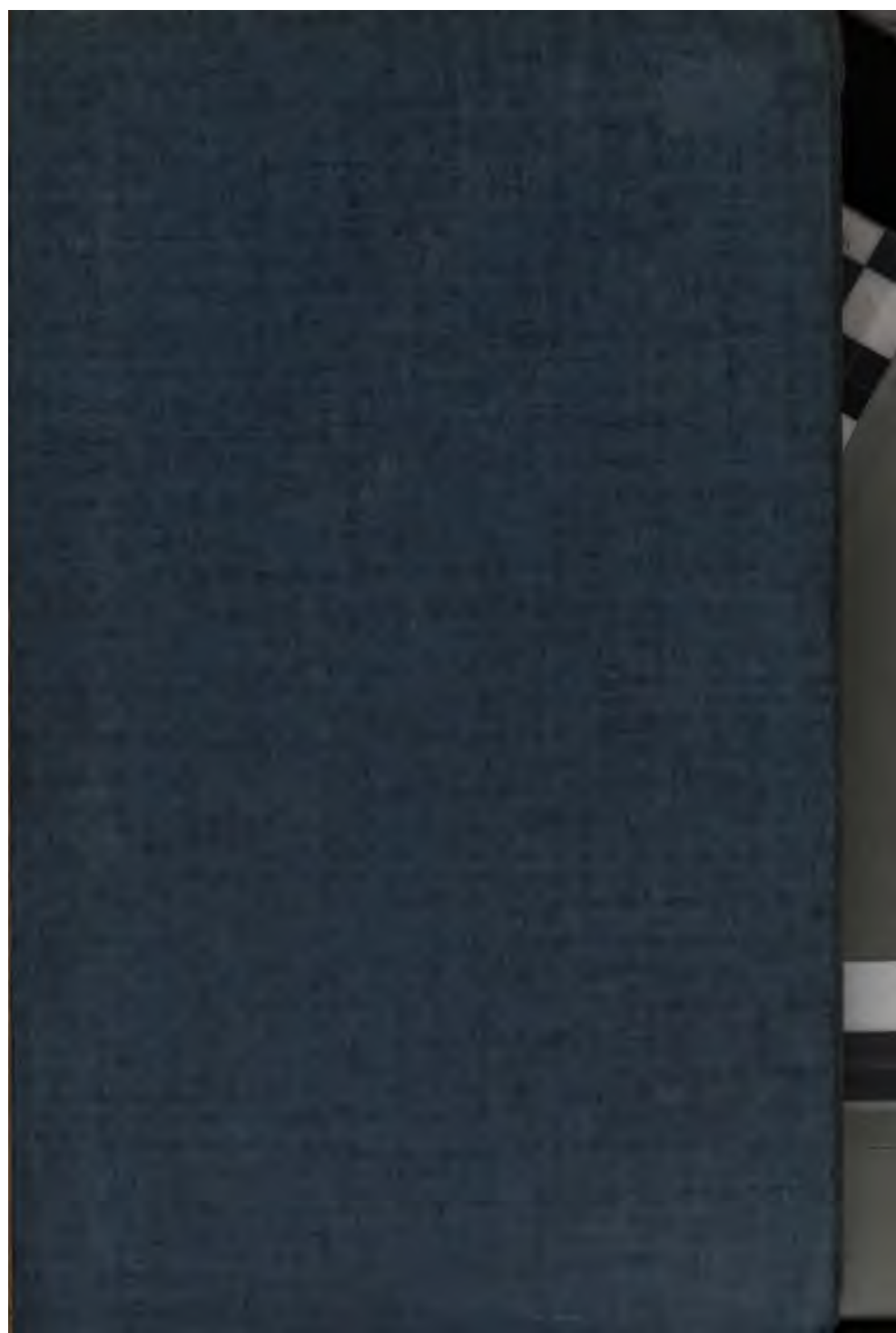
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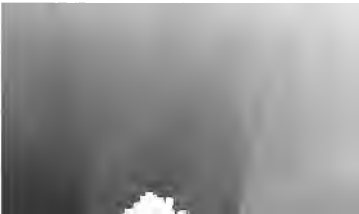
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With affectionate regards.
"G. A. Bowman.



SONNETS FROM A PRISON CAMP

SONNETS
FROM A PRISON CAMP
BY ARCHIBALD ALLAN BOWMAN

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FOREWORD

FOR allowing this slight volume to see the light of day I have but one excuse to offer. The situation to which these verses are the emotional reaction represents a very real and serious piece of experience. It is no mere poetical exaggeration to say that in the first days of captivity at least, the writing of the sonnets was a labour that "stood between my soul and madness," and I cannot help feeling that what, under one of the heaviest blows that can befall a soldier, has meant so much to me, may have in it something that will raise it at times above the personal to the level of general human interest.

It ought to be a pleasure to acknowledge generosity in an enemy; and I wish to express my

v

indebtedness to Captain Hohnholz, Commandant of the Prison-Camp at Hesepe, to whose kindness I owe it that I am able to offer the sonnets as they stand for publication.

Offizier—Gefangenenlager
HESEPE, 17th August 1918

PROEM

He who hath never from behind toothed wire
Glimpsed, helpless, freedom's waiting amplitude,
Hath never watched, fast rooted where he stood
The embers of another day expire
In glory welling westward, like the pyre
Of some spent viking whom the Atlantic flood
Bears dwindling into that infinitude
That great souls end in ; then around the fire
Of his own musings, lodering through the bars
Of a shrunk life, hath sought awhile to limn
His lost felicity—can ne'er divine
The vastness of the common things that line
Life's banked horizon, nor hath learned to rim
Infinity with galaxies of stars.

RASTATT, 26th April 1918

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SONNETS FROM A PRISON CAMP

IN THE FIELD

I

Two hours before the mist of morning paled
Beneath a sun that never showed his flame,
And spectral day stole on the world with shame,
Into the night unsentinelled there sailed
The whistling murder, sudden. Sudden wailed
Shrapnel, and breaking cloud, began to claim
Window and tile down clattering from the frame
Into the littered causeway. Dreamers quailed,
And propped themselves to listen, or rising, crept
From corridors by fitful candle ; then
Gathered scared children down the winding stair,
And only whispers passed where no one slept.
And thought drew rein, surmising wildly, when
The guns spoke murder over doomed Estaires.

RASTATT, 27th April

II

“Stand to !” The warning word was hardly said,
And had not moved a man, when round and round
Forthwith the steaming kettles came to ground,
And the men swarmed to dip their hasty bread,
A soldier’s morning bite. Still overhead
Murder flew hurtling, shell by shell, and found
Earth in some rearward purlieu, quenched in sound.
Breakfast began, but not a man was fed
Ere the growled “Fall in” menacingly proved
The dog’s bone kinsman to a soldier’s meal.
We mustered, lowering, hungry. The ranks grew ;
And it was seen the world again had moved,
As at the impulse of a groaning wheel,
Unto some issue, from that first “Stand to !”

RASTATT, 27th April

III

Unto some issue, Whither ? No one dreamed
What menace crouched behind that bankèd mist,
Massing to bear down on us. No one wist
What power that shrapnel covered as it screamed
Futilely overhead. Scarce more it seemed
Than many a day had happed, of trials the least,
Vexatious interruption of a feast,
A broken night, a day spoiled ere it gleamed.
But still the thickening barrage combed the air ;
Still whistling shrapnel sputtered into smoke ;
And momentarily the cobbled roadway shook
With sickening thud where freighted monsters took
The earth with double thunder. Here and there
Blood trickled into hollows. No one spoke.

RASTATT, 27th April

IV

The bridge across the Lys ! A slender thread
To bind or bar thy holders to their own ;
But one span, small and narrow, lightly thrown
Over these sullen waters, lightly shed.

Upon thy planks the heavy-booted tread
Of men who seemed with sudden trouble grown
Haggard. "What are you ?" "Durhams."

"What is known ?"

"Our billet down, our officers are dead.

We seek a new position further on."

Position ! Little recked they then how steep
The way, how sure the ending. They were gone,
And the keen harvester prepared to reap
In fresh fields. The mourne blanket of the dawn
Gathered the Durhams to eternal sleep.

RASTATT, 28th April

V

The Church of Nouveau Monde ! Lead on. 'Tis
there

We concentrate. There hung in the void street
A local silence, which our sudden feet
With lesser clangour startled in its lair,
While, strangely, not the brood that racked the air
Could break the boding hush of that retreat.
So in a thunder-storm the quickened beat
Of one's own startled pulses may impair
The silence of a room which the onfall
Of shafted noise o'erhead left deadly still.
Perchance the mind doth place as on some plan
The figured sounds which figured space do fill,
Far or more near. 'Tis sure the hodding van
Broke forward into silence virginal.

RASTATT, 29th April

VI

Waiting ! A soldier's sacrament of strain,
The eager cup of poisoning destiny,
That may not pass from him till it is dry,
And Death with peace, or Life unveils with pain.
Full many in this demented play must drain
That cup but once. Full many a soul must try
Its sharpness, till numbed sense hath lost the lie
Of a life's landscape, smitten from the brain.
Then in a falling twilight of the mind
Their way into that temple oft they grope,
Where from the true, strong human hand doth slip
Life's vesture of live colours, meaning, hope,
Purpose and fear, leaving dumb wont behind,
While the word " Fate " drops dreaming from the
lip.

RASTATT, 29th April

VII

What of our comrades in the forward post ?
The fog of war but deepened with the day.
We knew that in that troubled ocean lay
Uncharted shoals, blind rocks, and treacherous
coast.

And what of yonder never-ending host
Of wan, unwounded Portuguese ? Ah, stay,
Pale sergeant. Do you bleed ? You came that
way ?

What is the tidings ? Is the front line lost ?
“ Nothing is known of posts that lie before
Laventie. At the cross-roads hellish fire
Has cut them off who shouldered the first load.”
Can they live through it ? “ They can not retire,
Nor can you reinforce. I know no more
But this. No living thing comes down that road.”

RASTATT, 30th April

VIII

Still waiting ! And the oozing hours have crept
The morning out in vapour shot with fire,
That struck now here now there in random ire
Bloodily something human down, yet kept
Alone stagnation at arm's length. Men leapt
Suddenly to their feet, smit with a dire
Surmise, collapsed, and huddled in the mire.
No whisper passed. Some seemed as though they
slept.

Only the stolid bearers wound about,
Shouldering their still and dabbled burdens white ;
Or sharply a familiar voice rang out,
Comfortingly peremptory : " All right ?
Then keep together. Lie low. Do not doubt.
The hour will surely come when we shall fight."

RASTATT, 29th April

IX

Does the first softening of the season break
The winter of Glenogle ? Do the sighs
Of wooing spring bid curling brackens rise
On hillsides out of nothing for love's sake ?
How sweet it is to think that harebells shake
Over Green Lowther, where the shadow lies
Far in the Enterkin, beneath blue skies ;
In trance to see the catkined willows quake,
Where April stirs along Loch Lomond side ;
To watch the sands of Morar gently take
The Atlantic swell that softly combs the Isles ;
And through the gorgeous portals of the Clyde
To hear at dawn the thudding paddle wake
The ever-brooding silence of the Kyles.

RASTATT, 29th April

X

There is a stillness in the heart of sound,
How dire soever, if unloosed too long.
There is a time for pause in every song,
And in the whirling cyclone's heady round
A core of peace. So the taut soul is bound
With iron girdle, and with leathern thong
To the acute wheel of the sense's wrong
Only until the creaking spring is wound.
Then softening come sweet phantoms of far things,
Peopling the vacancy with joys unspent,
And visions of fair spaces left behind,
As if the genius of the place had wings,
And in the migratory hour were sent
To haunt awhile the silence of the mind.

RASTATT, 30th April

XI

Back from it, back ! The quelling mandate rang,
As the mad moment swooped upon the dream.
Straight heathered hillside, mountain, loch, and
stream

Flashed out of sight, and but the shrapnel sang,
And greater guns with stunning double clang
Rocked the earth under us. It well might seem
All hell was in the air—not without gleam
Of hope, the worst might prove the final pang.
Men crouched together, shaken as they took
That presence far too massive for their fear,
A quivering sense that something tidal welled
Over their perfect helplessness, and shook
The core of being ; yet that being held.
We knew a limber clattered to the rear.

RASTATT, 30th April

XII

'Twixt Nouveau Monde and Laventie there lies
A breastwork, where the clearing tempest found
Tossed remnants of the cyclone come to ground,
Part English, Portuguese in part. The skies
Brightened, the housing spirit to entice
Into the air ; the string its length unwound,
And nightmare, having pinioned, now unbound
Our helplessness. The hour had come to rise.
Alas, the lifting battle-fog proclaimed
The line was gone, with those who bore the brunt,
Our comrades, whom the fierce Valkyries claimed,
Closing upon them in the bloody hunt ;
And Veray lights at hand too well explained
The long and boding silence of the front.

RASTATT, 80th April

XIII

Gray figures stealing, and a headlong dash
From hedge to house, from house again to hedge,
And fifty rifles levelled on the ledge !
One instant on the aim, and then, the crash !
He went to earth, and vanished in a flash.
And there once more was house, and there was
hedge,
With sprouting field, and farm, and ditch with
sedge,
And crop-head pollard row and leafless ash—
A cheerless landscape gray, and the profound
Loneliness of the battlefield. The next
Moment trench-mortar shells were on our head ;
Another, and the day was sealed and fixed
On front and flank. Among the stricken dead,
One in the skull, behind, his summons found.

RASTATT, 1st May

XIV

—Found it behind, while yet his soul was set
And his eyes eager with the death he planned
For his foe forward, where he stood and manned
His gun upon the roaring parapet.
We knew the sign, the closing of the net,
The baying of the pack on every hand,
Terror of isolation. Still it fanned
Some flame within. We were not conquered yet.
Circled with unseen fire, we only heard
The bullets whistle round us, only saw
The solitude of battle. Nothing stirred.
And yet, unseen, we felt his forces draw
Upon us, earthed at length where earth had lured
Treacherously to cover. We endured.

RASTATT, 1st May

XV


A man dashed in among us and caught breath.
A sergeant, resolute and silent, one
That we who knew him trusted. He had run
As men run only in the face of death,
Yet had not fled. What is it that he saith ?
“ The game is all but up, the end begun.
Live men we shall not see another sun.
Laventie North has fallen, a feast of death.
’Tis your turn, sir. Your left is in the air,
And through the breach, five hundred yards away,
His fours have marched on Saily and Estaires.”
Column of fours ? No ! Then God save the day !
These breastwork trenches !—’Twas as if there
snapped
Some devilish mechanism on us—trapped !

RASTATT, 30th April

XVI

How it befel ?—The overreaching arm,
Bombs ; and he was among us. In his plan
Surprise completed what surprise began.
The treacherous shelter of a too-near farm,
A ditch along a road, a false alarm,
Thirty yards of the open ; in the van
A desperado running—How he ran !—
And the pack had us. Hands up and disarm !
—It is the end of all, the bitter end,
The unpardonable, though ineluctable,
A breach in life no living now will mend ;
The sin that sinned not ; fell not, yet a fall.
One thought burned in the brain : How dear it
cost
England to gain what I this day have lost !

RASTATT, 1st May



THE NADIR

2

I

There is no moment in the life of man
More potent to subdue the stuff that binds
His manhood into one than that which finds
The work the founders of his race began,
And centuries enlarged, until its span
Encompasses a nation, bodies, minds
And institutions, scattered to the winds
Out of his life, of which it held the plan.
And with the sense of something sacred sold,
His heritage, and branded with the crime
Against the ages, from the lowest pit,
Gathered for judgment meet, his eyes behold,
Tier after tier upon the banks of time,
The generations of his fathers sit.

RASTATT, 1st May

II

One moment and his reeling world has rolled
Back into ages now no longer fit
For human dwelling. Here exalted sit
The cruel strong, and, with the cunning bold,
Possess the meek's inheritance, and hold
The good man in subjection—ages knit
With blood and iron, and with arson lit,
Crusted with murder, wanton, fierce and cold.
And England, who so mightily championeth
That freedom forced from us (our guards were met,
And we went, speechless—to a living death)
—England—a new light breaking on me, set
My brain aworking—England lives ! The breath
That moment spared I hold for England yet !

RASTATT, 1st May



ON THE MARCH

I

Never wound cortège more exceeding slow,
Nor mourners to more melancholy tones,
Than that wan wending, musicked by the moans
Of wounded men, whom pity bade us show
That much of tenderness. Nor friend nor foe
Spoke in the heavy language of these groans,
But stark mankind, whose utter anguish owns
A common nature, in a common woe.
Full many a mile of weary footing sore,
By miry side tracks, not unkindly led ;
And each unwounded man his burden bore
On stretcher or in blanket, ransacked bed,
Duck-board uprooted, hand-cart, unhinged door.
We left behind the dying and the dead.

RASTATT, 2nd May

II

Hour followed hour, and slowly on we wound,
Till wan day turned to front the gradual west ;
And with day's waning waned the dream of rest
For the worn bearers, whom the twilight found
Voyaging no-man's gray, wide-watered ground,
Their shoulders bowed and aching backs distressed ;
Isthmused between deep pools, and sorely pressed
To foot the flanks of many a slippery mound ;
While floundering convoys, till the light was gone,
Across the perilous space their drivers nurse,
Limber and gun, by frightened horses drawn,
Whose plunging swerve that bogged their burdens
worse,
Provoked Teutonic fury, well laid on
With sounding whipcord and sonorous curse.

RASTATT, *2nd May*

III

And darkness fell, and a great void of space,
As if to bar our further going on,
Unfeatured, huge, gloomed o'er us. No light
shone.

Strength, too, scarce held sufficient now to trace
The squalid reaches of this dismal place ;
And silence settled near and far upon
That vacancy at length—our last guide gone.
Night hid each from his comrade, face from face.
As is a voyage through the uncharted waste
Of seas, unpiloted by any star,
Alone, unmooned, uncomforted, unplanned ;
So forward still in silent pain we paced,
Nor light of moon nor pharos gleamed from far
Across the boding gloom of that lost land.

RASTATT, 3rd May

IV

We came to Aubers at the dead of night,
And found the semblance of that circled hell,
Which Dante once, damnation's pains to tell,
Paced out in darkness, agony and fright.
In that blank lazarette no kindly light
On bending form of nurse or surgeon fell,
But darkness and barred doors proclaimed too well
The piteous end of long-endured plight.
No room was there in stable or in stall,
Nor roof to shelter cattle while they eat,
Where wounded men could shelter from the blight
Of the foul dew that drizzling covered all.
But in the open and the squelching street
We left them to endure the drenching night.

RASTATT, 8rd May



V

There is a garden where the whispering breeze
Perchance has wooed the lilacs in the spring,
Where still perchance at dawn a few birds sing,
And love goes nesting in the willow-trees.
But night's ear now caught other sounds than these,
And darkness, bending, shrouded with his wing
What from an iceberg scalding tears might wring,
The glowing core of any furnace freeze.
Thick as the crimsoned leaves of autumn fall,
And crimsoned, too, and torn, and crushed as they
('Twas the wet hand that told it) over all,
Moaning and writhing in their pain they lay ;
And none to turn their faces to the wall,
And none to close their eyes, and none to pray.

RASTATT, 4th May

VI

So where the wide and shallow beaches bound
The ceaseless moiling of the North Sea hoar,
And on the sands the rounding billows pour
Their majesty of waters to the ground ;
As one by one the rising breakers pound
The beaten salt sands of the yeasty shore,
Their bursting charges' momentary roar
Dies in a background of prevailing sound—
Thus hour by hour the moaning did prevail
Over night's stillness, rose, and swelled, and died
In the sad level of a murmuring wail,
Like ocean's moan with voices multiplied
Along the reaches of the sounding graile,
The west wind wrestling with the flowing tide.

RASTATT, *5th May*

VII

The last march opened with the sudden blaze
Of howitzers upon the face of night,
Waving us onward ere the laggard light
Of morning broke down transport-crowded ways.
Next to the first was this the bitterest phase
Of our humiliation. Yet 'tis right
To chronicle some kindness, and requite
Our armed custodians with this word of praise.
By Fournes, by Haubourdin, the endless reel
Of marching men ran out its windings slow,
Till near day's end, nigh broken on the wheel
Of hunger, and scarce longer fit to go,
Within the moated Citadel of Lille
The sharper pang gave place to deeper woe.

RASTATT, 5th May

VIII

—The deep woe of the mind when prison walls
First darken it with shadow, throbbing hot
To meet the outrage, as the bolts are shot,
The locks ground home, and the long silence falls.
And next a settling helplessness appals
The sinking soul, as if that hour should blot
One's name out of the Book, as if one caught
Of life's retreat the hurrying last footfalls.
Where once a vision smiled of rankèd days
Drawn on life's vista'd curtain rich and vast,
Only a gulf now yawns. Of all the plays
Played out in visions, we have played the last.
The future bankrupt, 'tis the present pays ;
And of life's triple span, remains—the Past.

RASTATT, 5th May

RASTATT



I

Yet morning comes with pageantry of fire,
And evening falls with majesty of flame,
And every hour hath something to reclaim
The waste of life, slow wilting behind wire.
It were a doleful dungeon that could tire
Nature's incessant carefulness to shame
Sheer stalemate from each thing that lives, and
claim

All motion for her universal choir.
Thus day by dreary day the chargèd hours
Pass influence from the sweetness of the hills
Across these cages, and the scent of flowers
Is wafted, and the fragrant dew distils,
And unimaginable stir of powers
From the deep sense of woods divinely thrills.

RASTATT, 7th May

II

Two silent influences mainly move
The captive's mind, not wholly sunk in sloth,
Nor lost in carnal craving—dangers both
That to the core the sterling manhood prove.
One is the sense of shrinkage, of the groove
In which the soul enshuttled—O how loth !—
Feels stoppage of life's pulse, arrested growth,
Heart-sickness which no medicine can remove.
The other wakens when departing night
Throws up the windows of the spacious morn
Upon a new day pulsing with new light ;
And from the hill the hunter with his horn
Sends down imagined valleys strains that smite
The spirit with the sense of something born.

RASTATT, 7th May

III

Within these cages day by day we pace
The bitter shortness of the meted span ;
And this and that way variously we plan
Our poor excursions over the poor place,
Cribbed to extinction. Yet remains one grace.
For neither bars nor tented wire can ban
Full many a roving glance that dares to scan
The roomy hill, and wanders into space.
Yea, and remains for ever unrepealed
And unimpaired the free impetuous quest
Of the mind's soaring eye, at length unsealed
To the full measure of a life possessed
Awhile, but never counted, now revealed
Inestimable, wonderful, unguessed.

RASTATT, 7th May

IV

The long day waned beneath refulgent skies,
And evening sunshine bathed the hilltops round,
Where on the sudden from the level ground
Pine-vestured, solemn, summit by summit rise
The tops of the Black Forest. Wistful eyes
Wandered from peak to peak, as if to sound
Their mystery, if perchance there might be found
Some healing essence there, some glad surprise.
Long strove the puzzled spirit, vainly yearned
Into that alien soul to force its way ;
When suddenly—the mystic rune was learned !
And in an upland glen remote and gray
There moved a presence known and last discerned
In Glendaruel on a morn of May.

RASTATT, 7th May

V

O May ! O month of months divinely dear,
Which severest, amidst the toil and strife
Of Nature's round, as with a glittering knife,
A perfect segment from the varying year !
Month of entrancing spaces, wide and clear,
Calling us to the open, thick with life,
All leaf and lamb and freshness, welling, rife
With blossom—can it be that thou art here ?
O that it were in some sweet Scottish strath,
Backed by the mountains, watered, green and wide,
Where the Tay laves in shallow crystal bath
His pebbles, or the Forth's meandering tide
Receives Dumyat's shadow o'er his path,
And young light breaks down Ochill's mottled side.

RASTATT, 8th May

VI

As the lone searcher, crouching o'er his glass,
Beside the window while the light is high,
Doth moved therein the forms of things descry
Invisible else to common vision crass ;
Spirilla, the amœba's sprawling mass,
With gliding infusoria sailing by—
And marks each vestige with entranced eye,
Glimmer, emerge and clear, dissolve and pass ;
So in that optic lens, where never yet
The sun prevailed, beneath my prison wall,
One-windowed to the past, but brightly lit
By the eye's own pure light, a swarm of small
And fleeting memories, else forgotten, flit,
Trivial, yet entrancing to recall.

RASTATT, 9th May

VII

Oft at the hour when night's aërial spring
Waters with dew the beauty of the morn,
What time another rosy day is born,
Along these lanes the echoing footsteps ring
Of marching men, who to their marching sing,
Deep-voiced, light-hearted. Yet they do not scorn
Due pause and measure, and the theme well-worn
From the full heart of Germany they bring.
But we, whose fathers once in songs as fine
Unburdened hearts as full, and with the power
Of our dear country pulsing in each line,
Scorn to remember England, and to our
Incomparable heritage of song
Prefer the tinkle of some mean ding-dong.

RASTATT, 9th May

VIII

All is not well with England. Her great heart
Beats faultily and to no music set.
She hath her moods, suspicions, and doth fret
The daylong hour, by night doth toss and start.
Oft she stands dreaming in the crowded mart.
'Tis true that this distemper doth not yet
The deeper functions of her life beset,
And mightily she plays her mighty part.
Yet sometimes in this tempest the heart fears
Whether, so faulted, the old anchor grips.
And shall we find, we ask, when the sky clears,
England still mightier than England's slips?
Let our own past proclaim it. Let the years
Advance and set their trumpets to their lips.

RASTATT, 9th May

IX

The root of our infirmity is found
In English liberty, grandly achieved,
Yet little understood and ill conceived,
And sprouting rank from the uncultured ground.
Too much the thought prevails that man unbound
Is man made free, a life oft unretrieved
From chaos by a content ; undeceived
Only when licence runs the ship aground.
O England ! Mother ! whom thine every child
Loves, surely, to the last, forgive that some
Must fear the loss of thy benignant strength
Through the mind's error—lest, too freely wild,
Thy liberty of indifference become
A liberty of impotence at length.

RASTATT, 9th May

X

There is no single foot of English soil,
Howe'er defaced, that is not holy ground.
There is no spot where great souls more abound,
Or where man's greatness is more truly royal.
Who hath o'ertopped our Shakespeare ? Who by
toil

Of kingly thought more lofty, more profound,
Than Newton e'er from heaven's majestic round
Brought home at night a more stupendous spoil ?
One thing I find not well. In our reserve
We oft-times cloak our excellence, ashamed
Not of our imperfections, but our Best ;
And what is finest, most our own, we serve
In some mean dish, or pass it by unclaimed,
Leaving the noble in us unexpressed.

RASTATT, 9th May

HESEPE

I

A lonely camp and small amidst the miles
Of the Westphalian plain, where islanded
In the green waste our simple lives are led
Out of the troubled world. Here morning smiles
Splendidly, and the mustering twilight wiles
To a strange sense of peace consummated
Over these low-hung woods, where setting red
And oval the sun the yearning eye beguiles.
Then as the white and sheeted vapour steals
Along the flats lagoon-like, comes a breath
Of anguish from the void, where still is hurled
Nation on nation ; and the spirit feels
A tidal presence of o'erwhelming death
Stir through this weird backwater of the world.

HESEPE, 19th May

II

How hard it is to think upon this shoal
Of Inanition that the world's ablaze.
How hard to link these lazy summer days
With ends and issues that will not unroll
Their length in æons—mankind's furthest goal,
Perpending in the thick and murderous haze
Of yonder battle-hurricane that lays
Legions to rest till the last tattoo roll.
On sun-beat sand the busy ants deploy ;
Industrious spiders ply their little looms ;
With brush and pencil or with book we toy.
The quiet evening nears ; the beetle booms.
God blazes at the world. Hell gapes for joy.
And Europe whitens with those nameless tombs.

HESEPE, 30th May

III

Scanted of life and vented on this shore,
Where but the salt and sailless ocean plies
His tide of time with soulless fall and rise,
We conn the unfeatured waste from pole to pole.
Daily the gray remorseless waters roll
Out of the blank of gray remorseless skies,
And nothing happens. Then we close sick eyes,
And sadly the soul communes with the soul—
When often o'er night's face a sudden glow
Of Boreal splendour palpitating plays,
And the long runners, shaking tress-like, show
Our life's plan in a vision which betrays
Our secrets to our pillows ; and we know
Our selves more clearly than in happier days.

HESEPE, 4th June

IV

When in this deep Re-entrant's sullen shade,
What hour night's middle watches change reliefs,
The mind compiles the roster of its griefs,
Before the inward eye there oft parade
Life's serried loves, appointed and arrayed
For high inspection, potentates and chiefs,
And armed retainers whom some bond enfeoffs,
And all precisely marshalled grade by grade.
Then we discern at length where each doth stand,
In front or rear, and what the rank they bear ;
The acquainted Mass, the Intimates, the band
Of such as do the forward stations share.
And last the One with none on either hand.
And thou art She, whose ring and seal I wear.

HESEPE, 4th June

V

What time in empty hour awhile relaxed,
Around my cage's circuit I have paced,
Sunk in myself, and broodingly have traced
These late appalling issues, I have taxed
My country with a weakening will: "Thou
slack'st
Thy effort, England." Then some sight hath braced
My soul, and from my mind the doubt effaced.
England, it is not energy thou lack'st !
I felt it when one morn there sudden flew
Around the camp new life and boisterous cheer,
Unlike the mood of those who hitherto
Our wants supplied, and something did endear
The noise of labour to us, and we knew
That English orderlies at length were here.

HESEPE, 20th June

VI

My Countrymen ! The years that have gone by
Since Hengist came with Horsa from the sea,
Find the same substance in you, fiercely free,
Yet of that fundamental liberty,
The soul's state, oft unable to descry
The deeper import, your simplicity,
Your limit, only natural chivalry
Redeeming what your insight doth deny.
Unskilled to conn the inwardness of things,
There is a health about you keeps you clean,
Derisive of all high pretence that chimes
Not with your plainness, sound. Your laughter
rings
Over hard toil, and all things grandly mean
Your humour shatters, punctures, or sublimes.

HESEPE, 22nd June

VII

With little tasks we wile the hours away,
Each bringing shyly forth his piteous store
Of erudition, oft-times dubious lore,
Since memory cupboards all we dare to say.
One tells us how to mine, one how to lay
A crop of good Rhodesian maize. Nay more,
The skirts of metaphysics we explore,
And touch the dread fringe of psychology.
O to be hidden here amongst the seams
Of History's garment, while the whole world rocks
Upon its base ! When every day that gleams
Tells us that England still against all shocks
Raises her front ; and starting from our dreams,
Each morning Hesepe the lonely mocks !

HESEPE, 80th May

THOUGHTS OF HOME

I

As are the features of some well-loved face,
On which a life's prolixity is writ
In moving characters much conned and fit
Across a single soulful ground to trace
Feeling and thought and purpose, like the grace
Which motion adds to loveliness (there flit
The spirit's shades, and there the lamp is lit
That lights twin souls to a lifelong embrace) ;
So to the city-dweller hath the town,
Much conned, its moving physiognomy,
Which oft in exile, as the sun goes down,
Teams in the caverned dusk of memory
With haunting visions of dear streets, that crown
Night's sorrow with entrancing imagery.

HESEPE, 19th May

II

Does the slant touch of early light awake
The sirens on the Clyde, and fling the door
Wide on the city's rousing all-day roar ?
Are the streets well a-clatter ? Do they break
From tram and train, that travelling host, and take
The town by storm ? Does gathering traffic pour
Over the tide-line of night's silent shore,
Into the spaces, till the cobbles quake ?
While down the river, crowded to the brink
With huddled shipyards, many a loaded quay,
Ten hundred thousand volleying hammers clink ;
And the slow homing liner booms to see
The ever-coiling waters still a-wink
With mirrored shipping freighted for the sea.

HESEPE, 19th May

III

Ah me, I dream of what they do at home
This Sabbath sunrise of the early prime !
The slumbering city waking to the chime
Of opening church-bells, when the sun hath clomb
Full half-way up the hollow of heaven's dome ;
The leisured family muster, the sublime
Jollity and the uplift of the time
That sets the week-worn spirit free to roam ;
The walking to the kirk, the solemn hour
With the Creator, lapsing at the close
Into the sweet expansiveness that plays
Round the church door, when from the too tense
 power
Of prayer and praise the natural spirit flows
Back to its level.—That was in past days.

HESEPE, 19th May

IV

What do they do *to-day*? What form of fear
Haunts the now voided chambers of their life,
Troubling its ancient tenor, parent, wife,
Survivors of the broken circle dear
In the old home enisled, as in some drear
Interspace of existence, till the strife
Is overblown, and but the echoes rife
Volley adown the days still left them here?
How they must suffer!—Yet these later shocks
Displace not from my brain the life it knew
Before the Power that our planned journey mocks,
Over our faring war's dark glory drew;
And when my miser mind its store unlocks,
It takes out treasures rather old than new.

HESEPE, 20th May

V

So thus I picture it, not as life lies
Now writhing, but as when the days and nights
Followed each other in unmarked delights ;
Nor noted we the measure of the prize
Till all was over. Now the spirit cries,
What time encroaching Inanition blights,
For but the phantom of its past, and fights
Extinction with its memories. Let them rise !
Let me dissemble that as in past days
The crystal fountain with delicious flow
Of bursting social joy unconscious plays
Over the garden close, where row by row
The flowers of life in such profusion blaze
That their own loveliness they do not know.

HESEPE, 20th May

VI

Day follows night, and night returns to day
Through all the enchanting stages of the spring ;
And exile lengthens out to months that fling
Their shadow further, and my life grows gray ;
Grays even with the sun's increasing ray ;
While forward still the heading heats do wing
Into the year, that softly rounds his ring
To midsummer, and June is on the way :
The perfect season, when the hawthorn blows
Down cream-white Scottish hedges, and the spent
Airs of the evening gently swaying close
Tired eyes upon it, heavy with its scent ;
While on the Downs the beating sunlight glows,
And sends the wildering roses over Kent.

HESEPE, 21st May

INFLUENCES

I

When in the waking visions of the night
I travel back the miles my feet have worn
Since with a cry my spirit was reborn,
There stirs again the anguish and delight
Felt first as each new vista on the sight
Swam in the luminous duskiness of morn,
And the soul quested down the long leagues, torn
With its own thirst for vision and more light.
One realm in thought I near with awe profound,
Where hangs the Slav for ever on his tree,
Bedewed with sorrow, with contrition crowned,
And thorns of perfected humility,
The holy flowering of that cursed ground ;
And at the mighty portals Titans three.

HESEPE, 21st May

II

Russia, thy bitter sorrows partly spring
From the deep cleavage which, as with a knife,
Severs what is most native in thy life
From what thy troubled history doth bring
Out of dark days that threatened once to wring
That life itself from thee. The very strife
That heals our Europe through thy pains, is rife
With thine own Tragedy, still on the wing.
Here stand thine institutes, designed to sway
A local life within thee, Zemstvo, Mir,
And Duma, people's parliaments ; and here
The iron empire with the feet of clay,
That froward issue of the Olden day
When Ivan's legions laid the Tartar spear.

HESEPE, 22nd May

III

The other cause behind the ages lies,
A-swelter in the elemental yeast,
Where yet thou lay'st fermenting for the feast
Of nationality, thine opening eyes
Turned longingly to where the sun doth rise,
And thy great spirit, when the ferment ceased,
For ever oriented to the East,
Mysterious, helpless, beautiful and wise.
Thence while the bitter ages onward run,
And the fierce West doth rend a path through time,
Thou for the nations from the healing sun
Draw'st healing still, and in the teeth of crime
Provest by many a bloodless victory won,
Than this world's pride of power Love more sublime.

HESEPE, 22nd May

IV

Who is it loometh o'er the Steppes at e'en,
A giant from the sunrise of man's race,
Statured of eld, that immemorial face
Hewn out of Ararat, in which we glean,
And in the froward, patriarchal mien,
An old tale told in many a furrowed trace,
Moulded before the Sphynx crouched in her place,
By passion uncontrollable and clean.
For he hath sat with Abram in the tent,
And gazed on Hebron, till the blue heaven broke
Over them into stars. Then he went on
Down all the ages ageless and unbent,
Till in this later world of lesser folk
'Mongst men he towers the eternal Mastodon.

HESEFE, 23rd May

V

And all that man hath felt since man hath known
Life first within him, aye, and woman too,
Conceived and manifolded in him, drew
To limitless creation, widely sown
On teaming soil o'er which his breath had blown.
Magnificently carnal, through and through.
Each taste of the green earth, the brown, he knew,
And tasted deep, and joyed, and made his own :
The boundless steppe, to which the sky bends down,
The forest where the eternal shadows sleep,
The sowing and the mowing and the frost ;
The village and the pleasures of the town,
And birth and death and love, and the starred deep
Of heaven by night ; and here his soul was lost !

HESEPE, 23rd May

VI

Tolstoy is great in art, in thought not great.
Yet his thought troubles, oft-times shivering
through
With icy barb the best that thought can do.
And when we ponder o'er his latter state,
And note its argument, backed by the fate
That marked his greatness down, we feel here too
That Something elemental, vast and true
To which all things at length capitulate.
And ye who sadly ponder to behold
The ruin of such greatness, grieved to see
How the child in him acted, thought and spoke,
Perchance will wonder, when the tale is told,
Whether 'twas not a mightier Thing than he
On which the Titan stumbled when he broke.

HESEPE, 24th May



VII

So Tolstoy passed, and passing left behind
Not great themes only, but himself a great
And tragic Theme. Another shares his state,
Supreme within the kingdom of the mind,
As he where soul and body meet, combined
In lovely earth-forms. Dostoievsky, late
Thou cam'st into thine own, thy bitter fate
To be an exile ; for the world is blind.
But in thy mantic cavern, undismayed
Amongst thy spirits, named and known so well,
Each a familiar, and thyself a shade,
By whitest light of heaven, by reddest hell,
Unscorched, unblinded, ~~wrapt~~ yet unafraid, *J*
And true to thine own Passion, thou dost dwell.

HESEPE, 26th May

VIII

Deep-sounding, subtle, pitiful, profound,
Dredger of human nature, versed in crime,
Mated with every grief, who in the slime
Divinest well where purest pearls abound ;
Where darkness mostly reigneth thou dost found
A kingdom of the light, O soul sublime,
Most pure, most Christ-like spirit of thy time ;
And where thy feet have trod is holy ground—
Holy, yet haunted, and a realm of fright,
Not to be traversed but with flying feet,
And beating heart and racing brain alight
With fire from hell, and heated with hell's heat,
Till in the cooler spaces of the night
The o'erwrought spirit finds a safe retreat.

HESEFE, 27th May



IX

Here is thy limit, mightiest of thine age
An under- and an over-world to paint,
Peopled with epileptic and with saint,
The murderer's, ogre's, and the gambler's rage :
Too much of fever in thee to assuage
Our average human restlessness, the taint
Of a charmed subtlety oft rendering faint
The sense of man's salvation in thy page.
Perchance in thy heroic spirit, fraught
With too much tragedy, the causes lie ;
That spirit unembittered, overwrought,
In which a something fitful we descry,
A fretfulness, as in thine image caught
By Sonia Kovalevsky's soulful eye.

HESEPE, 28th May

X

Turgenev, gentlest of the sons of pain,
Who in a line, as Homer wont, distildest
The essence of all pathos, thou who fillest
A human place 'twixt the Cyclopean twain,
'Tis not with hell-fire driven o'er the brain,
Nor stretched titanic canvas that thou thrilllest,
But by the plotted garden-space thou tillest,
Making man's middle courses thy domain.
Here once more we discern how still great art
Meets nature greatly. Elemental powers
Pulse in thy perfect pages. Souls depart
With awe upon them to the silent bowers.
The world is ever with thee, its great heart
Laid to thy beating own, as thine to ours.

HESEPE, 21st May



XI

Wordsworth, above all poets in thee I find
What in the greatest we too seldom see,
The crowning virtue of tranquillity,
Effectual o'er the sorrows of the mind.
Others to gain such peace have left behind
This hard world for the realm of fantasie,
Or in a past remote found sanctuary,
Or in the end thought's burden have resigned.
One above all by daily struggle rose
Into a blue empyrean of the brain,
Self-mastering might, yet such as never knows
The deeper calm that masters. There remain
Nature's anointed dynasts. Only those
Whose peace is fundamental truly reign.

HESEPE, 30th May

XII

Of these thou art. And, Wordsworth, it is not
That thou hast missed man's feverish heritage.
Strange passions thou hast known, and noble rage,
Nor in Romance an anodyne hast sought.
And if to souls in trouble thou hast brought
Strength and relief, 'tis not thy sauntering page,
Nor oft-times common theme that doth assuage
The anguish of the spirit overwrought.
Rather it is that, deeply moved, thou sink'st
Deeply in nature's homeliness, thy rime
Plain as her face ; but, stooping as thou drink'st,
The eternal from beyond the hills of Time
Is on thee ere thou know'st it, and thou link'st
Thy being with it, suddenly sublime.

HESEPE, 31st May

XIII

Herein is thy celestial wisdom shown,
That thou, divining Godhead scarce concealed
In nature's plain immediacy, dost yield
To her the soul of poetry and thine own.
Until thou cam'st no son of time had known
The measure of the glory now revealed
In common things, the beauty of the field,
The moving grace of planet and of stone.
What bliss it was to feel as at the first,
But with that insight now supremely thine,
The trailing clouds upon a world accurst
In all their fresh and pristine splendour shine ;
While into that familiar face there burst
The expression of the Countenance divine.

HESEPE, 81st May

XIV

Sweetly at length, like faithful love abused
By cold neglect, in this domed interval
Of silent time returns with soft footfall
The echo of a music long disused.
Ah me, before such strains I stand accused,
So early known, and then my all in all,
And with the magic of the morning's call
And ethos of my ~~children~~ interfused— *childhood*
A nameless sense of youth that will not die,
While Homer's volleying dactyls surging send
The music of the wind-entangled seas
Around the world, and as the billows fly,
Shouldering each other shorewards, metely blend
His harping with the thunderous centuries.

HESEPE, 8th June

XV

Oft have I risen before the night hath flown,
To catch the hour of deepest silence sweet,
And through that hush to list in my retreat
The solemn voice of Æschylus intone,
His great Iambic, till the tale hath grown
Into a passion over me, where meet
Huge forms archaic, and on stately feet
Move to swift doom in Æginetan stone.
High over all in simple grandeur bold,
With crest on crest against the morning skies,
Yet in eternal shadow, I behold
The massif of the *Agamemnon* rise,
And through its marble caverns shuddering hear
The haunting voice of Clytæmnestra's fear.

HESEPE, 9th June

XVI

—Infatuate queen, who oft as lingering day
Rounds to his close, and passion's hour is nigh,
Through Atreus' halls on soundless foot doth hie,
And from the tower the purpling east survey—
Lest in the still and fearful night's thick play,
While by her beating side doth sweltering lie
Sallow Ægisthus with the hawking eye,
Swift Fate prepare a swifter stroke than they ;
And while love's maddening vintage they partake,
A sudden flame should redden all the land,
And beacon call to beacon, where they break
From the lone watchman on the Ægean strand.
“ The ship ! the ship ! His ship comes tossing o'er
The wine-dark sea. The King is at the door.”

HESEPE, 9th June

XVII

I paced entranced the mourne, melodious shore
Where Sophocles unwinds with matchless art
Life's tangled error, pondering in my heart
The tragic theme that middle diction bore—
The end not hopeless, when, all wanderings o'er,
By still Colonus in that place apart
The thunder rolled, and while the earth did start,
The old man of the sorrows was no more.
And I have felt the moving of the strings
Beneath the fingers of that troubled soul,
Third in the triple dynasty of kings,
Whose tenderness, beyond his art's control,
Over life's mutilated torso wrings
Fierce protest, agonizing for the Whole.

HESEPE, 10th June

XVIII

One scene, Euripides, throughout the years
Clings to the moving skirts of memory,
Among the images of things that lie
In beauty perfected, too deep for tears.
'Tis where, to still his faithful matron's fears
Through lonely days and nights of agony,
Having fulfilled his roving chivalry,
At length the Paladin of eld appears,
Thy Herakles ; and wife and children stand
'Neath that majestic manhood pure from blame ;
The basket circulates from hand to hand.
When of a sudden—*He was not the same.*
There could no more, but with the dripping sword.
And all that ruth impounded in a word !

HESEPE, 10th June



XIX

While still that music pealed an alien strain
Broke boisterous into sudden interplay,
Troubling the soul with laughter and dismay ;
And chattering drolls appeared, expressly plain,
And tingling to the immemorial vein
Of the obscene in all things formed of clay.
There pausing on the turmoiled scene that lay
Before my eyes, a light broke on my brain,
And vast Aristophanic laughter shook
Each nerve within me, and a hand did part
Some far-back curtain of the soul, and took
A portion of my years ; and I did start,
Divining art's new purport, to rebuke
And humanize the stiffly pure of heart.

HESEPE, 11th June

XX

It were not well with man did he not feel
At home with his own nature, all we are
Conspiring with our angel and our star
To keep our being whole, or, broken, heal,
Lest in some faulted mould the soul congeal.
And oft-times 'tis the Highest that doth mar
The Perfect in us, straining us too far,
And overreaching Justice. Hence the peal
Of that great cacinnation echoing woke
Appreciation of the lofty use
Of comedy, to shake the settling soul
Out of itself. The Elemental spoke,
And something broadened in me. The recluse
Unstiffened, and I felt my nature whole.

HESEPE, 11th June

XXI

Justice ! the very sound brings back the throes
Of that tremendous season when Youth sees
His world collapse, and beaten to his knees
He takes the bolt of doubt, all that he knows,
That he knows nothing. Underneath the blows
Of thought I laboured long in labouring seas,
Pledging my soul to martyred Socrates ;
And o'er night's face the star of Plato rose.
This much of truth I still divined, that here
Was internecine conflict ; only doubt
Strained to the uttermost a path could clear
To that last Deep where wind and tide give out,
And freighted Time drops softly out to sea,
A moving image of Eternity.

HESEPE, 12th June

XXII

Who to the visions of immortal Thought,
Engendered by the music of the mind—
First in that place where our poor human kind
Sit in the cave and watch the shadows wrought
By firelight on the wall, obscurely caught ;
Then luring on to where the soul, half blind,
Turns from the Splendour which itself divined—
With kinglier toil a loftier art hath brought,
Than Plato ? Who more haunted by the light
Hath ever yet gone coasting with the sun,
Or in the deep and constellated night,
Claimed from the spheres their voices as they run ?
Or soaring where the Eternal Glories shine
Hath stretched to earth a more majestic line ?

HESEPE, 18th June

XXIII

As deeply versed in that infinitude
Where man his doom within himself doth find
By no strait pedagogy, but divined
Through some more massive sense of True and
 Good,
A kind of Inspiration, the soul's food,
Derived from far, and working still behind
All conscious reason, till the labouring mind
'Neath that profounder suasion sinks subdued.
So Plato's thought grows cosmic, by its own
Illumination led and mystified,
And haunted by a voice of purer tone
Than reason's groping motion e'er supplied ;
The beam refracted by the Forms and shown
As coloured light wherein the soul is dyed.

HESPE, 14th June

XXIV

Thus do the greatest ever by sheer might
Of natural penetration find their way
Into the Innermost, where Being's ray
Burns unendurable, and in that light
Their own with nature's majesty unite
To one high rhythm, stupendous interplay
Of Thought and Being, perioded, gray
With shadow, with serenest sunshine bright.
So that old man of Koenigsberg profound,
By night revolving two infinities,
And so Spinoza, when his spirit found
Intellect into Intuition rise,
Envisaging creation from above,
Where knowledge takes the perfect form of
Love.¹

HESEPE, 14th June

¹ The "Amor Dei intellectualia."

XXV

But thy peculiar greatness more than these,
By thinking pregnant with creative art,
Subduing chance and moulding part to part,
Hath Cosmic in it, Plato, harmonies
That wake the dim immortal memories
We bring from the Eternal, whence we start
The round of Being, bearing in our heart
The echoes of the everlasting seas.
Here stands no accidental word. And so,
While theme with theme grows twisted and en-
twined,
Is freedom perfected. We gaze, and lo,
The argument is off before the wind,
Like some great trireme tacking endlessly,
Yet ever headed for Eternity.

HESEPE, 14th June

WATCHWORDS AND MAXIMS

I

“Live dangerously.” No braver mandate yet,
Nietzsche, nor charged with finer lightning ran
Around the world. And true it is the man
Who hath no menace in him, nor hath met
A threatening Universe with counter-threat
Is caitiff still. In those who lead the van
The Headlong is the guide to each new plan,
While lances leap, spears break, the ground is wet.
One prayer I prayed : “Lord, if Thou hast discerned
Within me ^aought of manliness, enroll
Thy servant with the fighters, who have earned
Their manhood’s charter where the thunders roll
Over the field, that so I may have learned
To taste this Element, and know my soul.”

HESSE, 6th June

II

There comes to me a memorable thought
Borne on that voice, which like some wandering
gleam
Brings freshness into Hegel's well-worn theme
From Naples lately, Croce, he who taught
That Art's true nature is not to be sought
In what is fitted only to redeem
By strict initiation souls who dream
Of beauty in some crafty pattern wrought,
But in the apt Expression, wheresoe'er
Expression apt is found, the Inward still
Externalizing till the soul declare
The thing within it, and divinely fill
With sound or sign the habitable air—
A language universal as man's will.

HESEFE, 18th June

III

Thus language is the type wherein revealed
Art's universal function we behold,
In sensuous forms appropriate to unfold
Whate'er of meaning Individuals yield :
A doctrine this which doth enlarge the field
To every man who in himself doth hold
But speech enough a simple thought to mould
In words well wedded to the sense concealed.
—Doubtless a truth, though strained beyond the
Norm,
If still the theme, with varying purport fraught,
Loses itself entirely in the Form,
And ugliness and beauty count for naught ;
And yet a truth, although a truth in part,
All art expression, not all expression art.

HESEPE, 18th June

IV

The Import counts. All great art greatly deals
With themes not insignificant. The less
Gives lesser art, howe'er the form express
The sense of that the artist thinks or feels.
And wonderful it is how life reveals
The great theme near at hand, did we but press
Our lives less fiercely, and our souls possess,
When stirred, until the fitting word congeals.
Art should not fail among us. All have eyes
Which bring the star-sown heavens nightly home,
And there are ever winds about the world.
And no man but hath felt the mysteries
Of birth and wedlock and death's solemn gloam,
Or seen the petals of a rose uncurled.

HESEPE, 19th June

V

Of Tragedy the essence and the goal
Is Vindication. Fear and pity close
The tale with mourning, but the issue shows
The moral order master of man's soul.
And as its slow and solemn waters roll
Thunderingly through the scenes, a sense there
 grows
Of some high Presence working in these throes,
Whose Being is the topic and the whole.
Thus not these personal griefs alone comprise
The theme of Tragedy, that theme more vast
Than its own content, deeper than the sighs
Of the doomed Titan hounded home at last—
The Universe in action, and the cries
Of Cosmic Vengeance closing with the Past.

HESEPE, 25th May

VI

“Gehorsam.” It is seldom that one hears
The German tongue commended. Yet I find
No spell more swift, more potent to unbind
The spirit’s shades in some fine phrase that clears
An entrance to the import of the years,
Where speech, unwinding as thought’s coils unwind,
Makes landfall, and companioning man’s mind,
Ends in the Innermost, whereto he steers.
And many a haunting solitary sound
In that strange tongue, with doubling content
 fraught,
Booms at the ear of conscience, whose profound
Responses in that energy are caught,
And Teuton loyalty, that holds its ground,
Sweeps Europe still, and sets a world at naught.

HESEPE, 4th July

VII

Two other words contrasting well distil
In two clear drops of sound significant,
And flavoured to the thought, the crowning want
That mars our enterprise—the English will,
Steadfast of purpose, but unsteady still
In the particular. Strange humours haunt
The earnestness of battle, and we flaunt
The eccentric in us even as we kill.
A nobly erring pride is here, disdain
Of death—and duty, when that duty chimes
Not with our liking ; and our stubbornness
Wants sternness in it to perfect the grain.
Of late to tragic heights the contrast climbs,
Which “ Ernst ” and “ Eigensinnigkeit ” express.

HESEPE, 5th July

VIII

Compel them to be free ! A true word there
Thou minted'st, Rousseau—half the human race
Still unaspiring to that crowning grace,
Still disinclined the easy yoke to wear.
Oh, that at length our people would but dare
To look their cancer fiercely in the face,
Consenting on the foul and rotting place
The short sharp anguish of the knife to bear.
For there are powers upon us that still sap
Our liberty and drain our manhood dry,
Which if we clear not speedily, mayhap
Our twilight follows and the end is nigh ;
Or else there rise a Strong One who will clap
The Teuton iron on us, and we die.

HESEPE, 7th July

IX

As when along a level land we pace,
The scene, from where our forward-moving feet
Touch ground, to where the earth and heaven greet,
Seems to revolve in some vast wheel's embrace,
Whose spoke-wise turning slow the eye can trace
From near-by hedges, wayside trees, that fleet
With rick and steading by, till all lines meet
And motion dwindles in far distant space—
There haply some majestic mountain mass
By contrast travels with us as we go,
And doth across the spirit, as we pass,
The feeling of its omnipresence throw—
So o'er man's fleeting and particular fate
For ever omnipresent broods the State.

HESERE, 30th June

X

Unto man's spirit thou art closely bound
By natural drift and consanguinity,
But more by long companionship, the tie
That holds you twain together tightly wound
First in his infancy, where thou art found
Like some great watchdog that doth panting lie
Stretched by his infant master, his dull eye
Wakeful, his sharp ear cocked at every sound.
Nay, for the bond is closer, 'twas thy face
Bent over him at birth ; thy kindly pains
Steadied his childish feet. Nor can we trace
What in his blood derives not from thy veins
By long transfusion unprecipitate,
Alive, organically intimate.

HESEPE, 19th July

XI

Suppose a race (the vision first I saw
Among the dark stern reasonings of Kant)
Resolved its past for ever to recant,
And from its island borders to withdraw :
No man shall move—I heard that doom with awe—
Until the wretched, last, lorn miscreant
By shameful death full reparation grant
To the offended majesty of Law.
So as man's coming race prepares to leave
The Island of its Present, where to-day
Europe in crime lies sweltering, and to cleave
A fresh path through the portals of the Day,
At History's bar the nations duly lined
Await their judgment. Some remain behind.

HESEPE, 7th July

XII

One thing upon the tablet of the mind
By fire should be imprinted. Nations stand
Only as to the touch of that great Hand
Their substance answers, which when it outlined
A cosmos on the waters, and designed
Earth's granite frame, and sundered sea and land,
Laid in man's heart a Law, more deeply planned
Than that of nations, compassing his kind.
And in that Law eternal stands revealed
How by self-abnegation man at length
Comes to himself, how to the meek is sealed
The habitable earth, how human strength
Is perfected in weakness, into dross
Earth's glory sinks confronted with Christ's cross.

HESEPE, 25th July

XIII

Protector of the spirit, who by night
With hands bent round it lanthorn-like dost frame
Against the wind a shelter for its flame,
Thyself a thing of spirit and a light,
The Commonwealth ! Yet in thy sovereign right
Thou may'st not unrebuked, unchallenged claim
To be the First and Last, a holier Name
Than thine intoning from a higher height.
For blood is on thy hand and on thy head,
And war's black cloud upon thy deep dark brow ;
And in thy shadow Socrates lies dead.
And though awhile it needs must be that thou
For man's unrighteousness shalt legislate,
Man's righteousness will yet become thy Fate.

HESERE, 17th July

ENGLAND AND OXFORD

I

Line after line the tale beneath the pen
Moves on, and rodent Time with tireless tooth
Works o'er our portion, till one day forsooth
We tread the cool gray shadow, ageing men.
This change I mark, and sadly pondering then
Catch the soul's murmur, accented with ruth :
" Oh, let me hear upon the lips of youth
' Eothen ' and ' Eothen ' once again ! "
And Oxford, oh, do thou with soulful toil,
While o'er our folk tumultuous ages throng,
Mounted at night as o'er some priceless spoil,
For us the fineness of this cult prolong,
Still nurturing in our sweet English soil
That glory from the Morningland of song.

HESEFE, 8th June

II

Yet, Oxford, it is better thou should'st know
That eyes which love thee in thy culture see
The withering curse of long sterility.
Rooted in England, thou hast ceased to grow
Together with her growth. Thy waters flow
Not with her broadening current to the sea,
But murmuring their delicious melody
They wander forth and wist not where they go.
And thus thy fine-edged spirit, which in high
Disdain hath never paltered with the pelf
Of modern rapine, doth too often fly
To endless crochets, wayward as an elf,
Self-humouring and posturing and shy,
And broods apart and lives unto itself.¹

HESEPE, 8th June

¹ It is hoped that it may not be thought too much of a liberty in an outsider to criticize anything so esoteric as the Oxford culture; but if so I should reply that it is just this esoteric quality which I wish to criticize. Admiration for Oxford and love of England alike compel me to deplore the fact that so typical a *product* of our national life should be so little *representative*.

III

None than thyself more royally to-day
Hath given to England in her hour of need.
In every field where England's children bleed
Thine own have there more richly bled than they.
And Oxford still incarnadines the clay
To such a sanctity as doth o'erplead
The voice of censure, silenced by the deed
Of the great heart that laid them where they lay.
'Tis their's, that murmur fluttering from the marge
Of thither Acheron, where their cares they ply
In deathless death : " O Mother mine, enlarge
Thy life to England's. Thou hast learned to die.
But while thy life thou dost so grandly give,
One thing thou lackest, Oxford : learn to live ! "

HESEPE, 8th June

IV

There is one source alone which can supply
New life and impulse. 'Tis a voice that rolls
Half inarticulate in English souls,
From field and mine and factory, where they ply
The single talent Fate did not deny,
Their labour. Now they hear upon the shoals
Of a sad life that there are other goals
To man's existence than they yet descry ;
And, scarcely yet discerned, they deeply feel
A presence over them, a haunting sense
Of music in the world, whose echoes steal
Unto them from the spheres, where in the immense
Circle of night and day the planets keep
Measure and watch, while mortals toil and weep.

HESEPE, 15th June

V

Thine be it to direct their steps aright
Unto that bourne which doth not cease to haunt.
They cry for it, not knowing what they want,
Or what for man is best—the use of sight ;
Some inkling of the precious power of light,
To glorify a mean existence gaunt,
And check the bitter self-inflicted taunt
That nothing worthy calls them home at night.
And thou can'st set them questing, make them feel
The nearness of true knowledge, where it lies
In common things with which they daily deal,
Yet ending in the Splendour of the skies ;
Or teach them in shunned volumes to detect
The simplicity of letters unsuspect.

HESEPE, 16th June

VI

Yet—for the kindly Mother may not quit
Her cloistered sanctuary, where from the height
Of scholarship's remoteness day and night
She strains truth's fabric—it is those who sit
A season at her feet, and learn to fit
Their spirits to her own, who must requite
These lofty cares, and carry out the light,
And serve it round, and tend its burning, lit.
But thine, O Kindly Mother, first to prove
Thy ministers, and having chosen, tune,
Bringing thy spirit o'er them, till they move
Like one at thy behest—as to the moon,
Passing soft influence from the quiet skies,
The oceans with their weight of waters rise.

HESEPE, 16th June

VII

One thing must be thine instant, anxious care,
Which on thine honour thou dar'st not refuse.
Long time our people now the habit lose
Of speech consecutive (which man should wear
Upon him like a garment, fit and fair)
And through some faulting of the brain abuse
Thought's flowing vesture of a thousand hues,
Oft shorn to shreds, all fluttering in the air.
I mark and grieve ; for in this lost control
We trace the weakness of these breathless times,
When man no longer keeps his nature whole,
Nor governs his spirit ; and it chimes
With the unruly in us, deadliest threat
Our English liberty hath fronted yet.

HESEPE, 17th June

VIII

It is not for art's sake this precious dower
Of speech must be renewed, but for the sake
Of life within. The expression doth not break
Silence in vain, but with reflexive power
To vitalize its source, and parting shower
New riches on the donor. Thus we take
Life's counterthrust upon our souls, and shake
The vessel, lest by standing Being sour.
All life's a language ; but 'tis not enough
To launch forth with it wildly into space,
Adding one atom to the blinding drain,
A pitiable froth-bell in the trough
Of each new cause, wherein the striving race
Tries issue with stern time—perchance in vain.

HESEPE, 20th June

HOME THOUGHTS ONCE MORE

I

A week of nights and days once more brings round
The Sabbath tide ; and once again the heart
Sets yearningly to homewards. Do they part
At the church door to-day, as when the stound
Of disillusioned fancy last unbound
Memory's deep wound, and in the bitter smart
The vision vanished ? Ah, the shadows start
To life again across the haunted ground ;
The kindly farewells said, the sauntering walk
Home through the sun-baked streets, by twos and
twos,
The friendly flow of pleasant secular talk,
And personalities and trivial news.
And the long winding prospect of the day,
The feast of children yet shall wile away.

HESEPE, 26-27th May

II

'Tis July, and a sunny stillness broods
On our magnificent England. Misty skies
Break into blue, and ripening harvests rise
Over her bosom. Her majestic woods
Ripple and sway before the varying moods
Of the west wind. The roses sacrifice
In every garden to the sun. There lies
Deep peace o'er all : no sound profane intrudes.
Far in the north the solemn mountains keep
A sanctuary amongst the shades that dwell
In the deep gloom of haunted Highland glens,
Where silence awes, and where for ever sleep
In lochs unfathomed and inscrutable
The shadows of the everlasting Bens.

HESEFE, 2nd July

III

There is another England, that which feeds
Our sinews where the champing engines chide
Beneath the settled darkness that doth hide
Earth's stricken face from Rotherham to Leeds.
Deep in that gloom the blinding furnace bleeds
A molten treasure : England is supplied ;
A million hammers roar along the Clyde ;
The transport of a million men proceeds.
And all this horror of the work of man,
Effacing God, I magnify and bless—
The way that leads out leading also through,
While God goes round to compass His great plan,
And out of ashes and of hideousness
By curse of toil Creation blooms anew.

HESEPE, 8rd July

1. The first part of the document is a list of names and titles, including "The Hon. Mr. Justice" and "The Hon. Mr. Justice".

INTERLUDE

I

My hundredth sonnet ! Here I pause to brood
A little by myself upon the theme
Ere once again with the meandering stream
Of my own thoughts I move. And it were good
To give thanks for the labour that hath stood
Between my soul and madness, like a gleam
Of sunlight in the darkness of the dream
Which passes over me, else scarce withstood.
Wonderful is it how the heart o'erwrought
Unloads in song, life's passionate rebound
'Gainst agonies whose barb alone hath brought
This bird of sorrows fluttering to the ground,
And with these wild and wandering flowers of
thought
The portion of a prisoner metely crowned.

HESEFE, 28rd June

II

I ponder on the form, and truth to tell,
'Twere scarcely to be deemed a sonnet chain
Which did not in its forged length contain
Some turn contemplative, where for a spell
The smith might lay his hammer by, to dwell
Upon the pattern, lest the octet strain
The content, or the sextet court in vain
A bigger thought than it can compass well.
And oft when to the varying interplay
Of partnered sounds I strive thought's flower to
train
Upon this trellis, the perplexing way
By lucky chance of rime lies sudden plain,
And I cry out with Agathon : τέχνη
τύχην ἔστερξε καὶ τύχη τέχνην.

HESEPE, 28rd June

III

Yet the sport wind that doubling oft blows home
Some welcome unforeseen felicity,
Is but, within the dreams of poesie,
Life's average accident, which all who roam
The spacious earth, or try the beckoning foam
Of some unvisited soul-haunting sea,
May count on as their portion—even as we
Who chance a star or two in this weird gloam.
Hence as in all high toil which must be traced
In long-drawn sequence, linking part to part,
Not chance nor inspiration can fulfil
The welded whole, nor vanquish that distaste
Which ever comes with pause ; but sovereign Art
Herself must bow to man's more sovereign Will.

HESEPE, 24th June

IV

So forward still, might but my strength avail
Out of the brooding darkness of my plight,
Each day to bring one glimmering shaft of light,
Each night to add some fragment to the tale,
That so I sleep. Else o'er my dreams prevail
These sorrows, or within me hour-long smite
The hammers of the brain, and turn the night
Into a thing to make man's reason fail.
—A little further ; for the thoughts still rise
Over me like a souging wind, that blows
From where the surges boom along the graile
Of the world's misery under lowering skies,
—A little further and my task I close,
Lest twilight overtake me and I stale.

HESEPE, 25th June

ENGLAND

I

England, the strain of weakness in thee shows
Like to some fell distemper which doth threat
Thy noble life with blight, and doth beget
Many malignant sores. The evil flows
Not from one source, but gradually grows
With thine own growth of years, wherein are met
All the deep instincts that did ever fret
The soul of freedom against freedom's foes.
But whatsoe'er the form, the effect is one ;
Some great cause grandly tried and bravely lost,
Some work of beauty marred upon the loom,
And at the final reckoning, something done,
Yet at a bitter and a fearful cost—
In broken hearts and many a needless tomb.

HESPE, 25th June

II

I heard it in the strife of other days ;
It reached me in my home across the sea,
That the great soul that made my England free,
And now must make her perfect, idly plays
With the tremendous issue ; that they raise
Sedition's banner with impunity,
And legislators, hot with laboured plea,
Pile law on law, while Law herself decays.
It is the everlasting cloud that dwells
Upon the summit, compassed in one word,
Disruption, whose deep thunder as it swells
Unnerves us, and arrests the falling sword,
Even to this hour, when but to differ spells
Lese-majesty, and loyalty means accord.

HESEFE, 25th June

III

Man lives by love. The state subsists by Law.
And in these sacred islands east and west,
Constant of late the Beast its scaly breast
Half rears from earth, and with its unclean paw
And bloody fang a-work, and dripping jaw,
Offers at England. It is time this pest
Were exorcised, and Unrest laid to rest,
With all that dares to hold thee not in awe.
So thou deal'st faithfully with God and man ;
With man, who prays thee, England, but to place
Thy heavy hand on all that doth immerse
The god-like in him, and distort his plan ;
With God, who made thee regent for a space
Over a portion of His Universe.

HESEPE, 1st July

IV

England, I trust thee. What thy soul hath planned
Will be performed ; and towards that last long end
Thou hast not wavered since thou first did'st send
Ship hot on ship, by freemen freely manned,
Over the sea to France's sacred strand.
Faithful thou art, and knowest well to blend
Patience with resolution, and to lend
To thy heart's aim thy gauntleted right hand.
This in the main. And yet the enterprise
Articulated, mocks the purposed whole
With fitful effort ; and the dread doth loom,
As each fresh crisis darkens all the skies,
That the Disruptive in thy restless soul,
Become habitual, is become thy doom.

HESEPE, 28th June

V

Forget it, England, that this Tempest finds
Thy life at home with troubles overrun,
Issues unsettled, justice to be done,
And dark distrust corrupting all men's minds.
Trust England, all her sons. Her millstone grinds
Slowly perchance ; but while in heaven the sun
Endureth, while their rounds the planets run,
Her word is bond, and what she binds she binds.
And England, see thou that these debts are paid !
Be firmly true to thine own children. Stand
For justice. Let these arms aside be laid.
And in our dear inviolable land
None but thyself go armed—the only blade
Out of its sheath, that flashing in thy hand.

HESPE, 28th June

VI

Until the day that England's sons shall learn
Not in that instant only when there burst
Thunders upon her to place England first,
But steadily, and in her face discern
The hunger-look of one who still doth yearn
Over the children whom her breast hath nursed ;
The long look of a mother, and her thirst
To see her children's eyes that look return—
Not till the day when o'er our local strife
The feeling of our nationality
Shall rise spontaneous as our English Life,
Outsoaring every animosity
By sheer force of its grandeur—shall we see
The truth come home and our free England free.

HESEPE, 29th June

VII

Have you e'er thought, you people, have you
thought

How great a thing it is in these great days
But to belong to England ? The world stays
Upon the event. 'Twas English armies caught
The onfall of the Cyclone. While they fought,
The world forbore to breathe. Stern Fate delays
The issue ; but that service and its praise
While England lives will never be forgot.
There was an honour that the ages kept
For English arms from immemorial time,
While yet the chivalry of nations slept
With mastodon and mammoth in the slime.
The æons rolled. Fate nodded. England woke.
The hour boomed forth. 'Twas England took the
stroke.

HESEPE, 1st July

VIII

Let every child of England every day,
While o'er the world these battle-thunders roll,
Enter into the silence of his soul,
And there communing with his conscience say :
“ I am a child of England, and I pray
That with a single eye and one fixed goal,
Thou grant me, God, to give my being whole
To England in her hour of agony.
Chasten me to the greatness of my fate ;
And, self-divided, make me one again,
That, as to this last rally congregate
The last stern remnants of my countrymen,
Thou may'st behold Thy England move as one,
Swift, final, justified of every son.”

HESEPE, 2nd July

IX

There have been moments haunted by the sound
Of riot in our midst and foul rapine,
Which, with more wealth, still makes our lives more
mean,
When I have asked : “ If one who strove to ground
Our life afresh should cast his eyes around
Amongst the people, one great class to glean
Out of the whole, that should keep England clean,
Where should this pure, effectual class be found ? ”
No answer came from those who still divide
The old tradition of a worn-out past.
I asked the Church : the labouring lost replied ;
For these the Publican. And at the last
I looked into the honest eyes of youth,
And knew—the exceeding bitterness of truth.

HESEPE, 5th July

X

My countrymen, if while upon the brink
Of this Penultimate of Destiny,
The world with gathered sinews, anxiously
Craning upon the plunge, awaits the wink
Of swithering Mars, I could but make you think
A wildish thought on purpose, it would be
That England in a night beneath the sea
Should like some greater Krakatoa sink.
Then while to water and oblivion
The great ship heels majestically down,
Ask ye what world it were in which the dawn
Sparkled no more on Ocean's jewelled crown,
But in that place where England used to be
Spouted and plashed the insufferable sea.

HESEPE, 9th July

XI

Can it be thought, or can the thought be borne,
That for a single hour beneath the sun
Earth shall endure, when England's day is done ?
A world without an England ! Yea, but shorn
Of the divinest gem her breast hath worn,
What most she makes for—doomed thenceforth to
run

Blind, lost, and calling for that treasured One,
Through star-sown space, unfathomably mourne !
Never again the liquid air to breathe
On a May morn among the Mendip Hills ;
Never to watch the green Atlantic seethe
Around the Lizard, while the Severn fills ;
Never to hear the quivering strings that hung
The speech of Chatham on the English tongue !

HESPERE, 10th July

XII

'Tis not these Islands sundered from the Deep
By many a winding and melodious strand,
Lovely as when they issued from the Hand
That bade the Shannon from his cradle leap;
That smoothed the Cotswolds to the wandering
 sheep,
And spread the waters o'er the Solway sand,
And motioned where Ben Cruachan should stand,
And in his shadow laid Loch Awe to sleep ;
'Tis not these shimmering woods of oak and beech,
Nor these green shires, each in its golden frame,
Like pictures hanging side by side, and each
Entangled with the music of its name—
Not all this weight of glory passing speech
Full measure of the English soul can claim.

· **HESSE, 11th July**

XIII

England is England's history, that great dome
Which ~~ever~~ us and our immortal dead *over*
Draws shadow, while men's common lives are led,
Strange thought ! in that superb half-light, half-
gloom.

And all who dwell in England, all who roam
The seas on great emprise inherited,
Gazing into that fulness overhead,
Behold a sanctuary and a home.
England's a spirit that doth interfuse
Whate'er is of her, every form wherein
Herself she reincarnates, all that strews
Her bosom and her years, and works within,
And spreads, and wells, and sinks, and overflows ;
And how to know her only Spirit knows.

HESEPE, 12th July

XIV

And in that spirit interpenetrate
The numberless appealing strains that bring
The look of England into everything
That she hath looked on till the night grew late ;
Where, as amongst the four gray seas she sate,
And mused upon it, she hath felt the ring
That bound her to her narrow island spring,
And something passed, and passing made her great.
And Empire mustered round her. Ere she knew
Her state, her hour was on her once again.
Herseemed that something winged from her flew.
Herseemed as though the feet of marching men
Bore past her to a music never mute
While England proudly takes that proud salute.

HESEPE, 12th July.

XV

It is her destiny. She seems to sleep.
She dreams ; and nodding, world on world is born.
For her the splendour of an eastern morn
The Coromandel sands profusely steep ;
The rocks of Aden sentinel the deep.
Her paths are round the Cape and round the Horn.
And where the sun goes down in seas of corn
Across the West their way her children reap.
Thus ere she hath outdreamt herself, the wheels
Of her achievement on their axle-trees
Have turned without her ; and upon her steals
A sense of waking amidst unknown seas ;
And wondering at her motherhood, she feels
The greatness of the Thing upon her knees.

HESEPE, 18th July

XVI

Soul of an empire that hath far outrun
Thy purpose, England ! thou who in the shade
Of thy maturing years thyself had'st laid
To rest amongst thy flocks—and lo ! the sun
Set never more upon thee ! One by one
The nations place them at those feet which strayed
Into the Innermost, where worlds are made,
And bless the Mother saw their race begun.
England, it must be that thou hast been sent
Some quest beyond thy vision to fulfil ;
That, Mother of the Mighty, thou art meant
To be the Organ of a Mightier still ;
And, while the final End we may not see,
We feel 'tis holier than or they or thee.

HESEPE, 14th July

XVII

My country ! To the height of this great thought,
With all that in thee is, with all the weight
Of thy self-consciousness, though born full late,
Upon thee, and thy thronging memories fraught
With germinating dreams, still to be brought
Unto fruition—chastened, consecrate
To the high calling of the Perfect State,
Thou must arise, or, failing, come to naught.
The Organ of the Highest ! pre-ordained
To execute the fateful judgment, planned
From the Beginning by the Power that deigned
First to create in air and sea and land
Each thing that breathes and seeks its daily food,
And having formed, pronounced Creation good.

HESEPE, 15th July

XVIII

Not to prevail by measure of thy might
O'er might that measures scarcely less than thine,
Bathing the naked world in blood and brine,
Till nature turns and sickens at the sight
—All but her vultures, gloating o'er the fight ;
And the sun rages daily down the line
That doth compel his radiancy divine
So fair a world to such a doom to light—
Nay, be thy function rather to disperse
The shouldering elements, that so the core
Of pure light in this glimmering universe
May by its motion kindling more and more
The look and loveliness of Spirit bring
Into the face of every living thing.

HESEPE, 16th July

XIX

The Hittite is no longer. Babylon
Has gone into the silence of the sand.
Mirage-like in the Syrian desert stand
The pillars of Palmyra. Greece is gone.
And where for generations softly shone
The drowsy Pax Romana, sea and land
Mouth at the fragile landmarks Hadrian planned.
The State departs for ever : Man lives on.
And England, would'st thou live, it can but be
As thou, a spirit, in the restlessness
Of thine abundant strength on land and sea
Becom'st the spirit's vehicle and dress,
Attaining in the measure of thy span
The spirit's measure in the Perfect Man.

HESERE, 21st July

XX

Man, little man, whose sun hath not declined,
Pale man with spirit written on his face,
Punched out of clay, and pitched on some mean
place,
A breath of being battling with the wind,
A prisoner on Time's floating isle confined,
Yet in himself encompassing all space,
While with the regal gesture of his race
He sweeps Eternity into his mind !
The Spirit ! The Encompasser ! O thou,
England my country, could I but behold
The steadiness of spirit on thy brow,
Could'st thou *encompass* spirit, I should hold
Thee master of the Future as the Past,
The immortal, perfect nation—and the last.

HESEPE, 21st July

XXI

Thou hast vast life in thee, howe'er uncouth,
And, unenlightened, dost possess the art
To feel the fairway home without the chart,
And erring still, inclinest still to truth.
The sense of justice and the sense of ruth
Are not yet dead within thee, and thy part
It is to be magnanimous. Thy heart
Bounds to the fulness of perpetual youth.
And while the shadows deepen into gloam,
And while the long years whiten on thy head,
Thy freshness fails not. Thou bring'st nightly
home
The sense that thou hast earned a dreamless bed.
The solemn Abbey, and the whispering Dome
Open to-day to take thy Immortal Dead.

HESSE, 22nd July

XXII

—Our own Immortals ! Ours while we can keep
An isle of quiet for you 'neath the hoar
Shade of the Minster, where the Nation bore
Your mortal relics weeping. Rest you deep !
Rest ! And while children's children softly weep
Over you, and the great rose windows pour
A glory round, at peace for evermore
In marble and in alabaster sleep !
—Knowing your England ! Knowing that while
Time
Tries men by fire, these men will not recede
From where their fathers of the early prime
Led them by generations great in deed
To deeds still greater, where on fields sublime
The freeborn sons of England bled—and bleed !

HESERE, 25th July

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Sonnets from a prison camp.

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